

## Claims

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1. A method of preparing an aqueous extract comprising saponins on basis of waste product from a butter tree of the *Sapotaceae* family, said method comprising the following steps:

5 (i) mixing one part waste product with 4-30 parts of water;  
(ii) incubating the mixture formed in step (i) under alkaline conditions; and  
(iii) recovering an aqueous extract comprising saponins by removing solids from the alkaline mixture formed in step (ii).

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2. A method according to claim 1, wherein the alkaline conditions are obtained by addition of an alkali in the form of a base and/or an alkaline buffer.

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3. A method according to claim 2, wherein the alkali is selected from the group consisting of: potassium-, sodium-, calcium-, ammonium-hydroxide or potassium-, sodium-, calcium-, ammonium-, hydroxide carbonate.

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4. A method according to any of claims 1-3, wherein the incubation in step (ii) is performed at a pH of 7-14, preferably 7-10.

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5. A method according to any of claims 1-4, wherein the incubation step (ii) is performed at a temperature of between 15 and 95 °C at a period of between 10 minutes and 5 hours.

6. A method according to any of claims 1-5, wherein solids are removed from the extract in step (iii) by filtration or centrifugation.

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7. A method according to any of claims 1-6 yielding an extract containing at least 1 weight-% dry matter.

8. A method according to any of claims 1-7, wherein the extract obtained in step (iii) is further concentrated and/or purified by evaporation of water and/or ultrafiltration and/or recrystallisation.

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9. A butter tree extract obtainable by the method of any of claims 1-8.

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10. A method of producing an aqueous extract enriched with sapogenins comprising the step of subjecting a saponin containing extract of claim 9 to enzymatic or acid hydrolysis, and thereby obtaining an extract enriched with sapogenins.

11. A sapogenin enriched extract obtainable by the method of claim 10.

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12. An extract of claim 9 or 11, wherein the active compounds are chemically modified to increase their solubility in oil.

13. Use of an extract of any of claims 9, 11, or 12 as a food additive.

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14. Use of an extract of any of claims 9, 11, or 12 in the manufacture of a detergent product.

15. Use of an extract of any of claims 9, 11, or 12 in the manufacture of a cosmetic product.

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16. Use of an extract of any of claims 9, 11, or 12 in the manufacture of a pharmaceutical product for topical application.

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17. Use of an extract of any of claims 9, 11, or 12 in the manufacture of a pharmaceutical product for lowering the level of serum cholesterol in a human being or in other mammals.

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AMENDMENT*

18. Use of an extract of any of claims 9, 11, or 12 in the manufacture of a pharmaceutical product for treatment of inflammatory diseases.

5      19. Use of an extract of any of claims 9, 11, or 12 in the manufacture of a pharmaceutical product for systemic administration.

20. Use of an extract of any of claims 9, 11, or 12 in the manufacture of a nutritional supplement.